

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, do you believe that air-strikes alone are going to remove the threat of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons from Saddam Hussein? Is that a fair thing to expect from military action, should push come to shove in the Gulf?

The President. Well, there have been many thoughtful public pieces—a lot of very thoughtful articles which have been written about the limits, as well as the possibilities, of any kind of military action. I think the precise question should be—that I should have to ask and answer—is could any military action, if all else fails, substantially reduce or delay Saddam Hussein's capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction and to deliver them on his neighbors. The answer to that, I am convinced, is yes. I am convinced there is a yes answer there.

But you have to understand that those are the criteria for me. I've told you before, I don't believe we need to refight the Gulf war. It's history. It happened. That's the way it is. I don't believe we need to get into a direct war with Iraq over the leadership of the country. Do I think the country would be better served if it had a different leader? Of course I do. That's not the issue.

The issue is that very sharp question, if the inspection regime is dead and therefore we cannot continue to make progress on getting the stuff out of there in the first place, and then—keep in mind there are two things about this regime. There's the progress on getting the stuff out of there in the first place, and then there is the monitoring system, which enables people on a regular basis to go back to high-probability sites to make sure nothing is happening to rebuild it.

So if that is dead, is there an option which would permit us to reduce and/or delay his ca-

capacity to bring those weapons up and to deliver them? I think the answer to that is yes, there is an option that would permit that.

Do you want to ask one more question?

Personal Integrity and Public Responsibility

Q. Prime Minister, as a man who understands the pressures of public life and also a friend and a religious man, I wonder what words of advice and support and comfort and sympathy you might have been able to offer personally to the President during these difficult times when he's under investigation?

Prime Minister Blair. That's what, in the British media, is called a helpful question. If I can—I don't presume to give advice at all. All I think that is important, which is what we have managed to do, is to discuss the issues that we set out and listed for you. And as I say, I think we would be pretty much failing in our duty if we weren't to do that. And I've actually noticed since I've been here and I've talked to many people here, that there is, of course, huge concern at the moment at what is happening in Iraq; there's huge interest in Britain, in the new government, and what we're trying to do in Northern Ireland. And, you know, I think the best thing is for us to concentrate upon those issues for the very reasons I've given, that that's what we were elected to do, and that's what I intend to do. And that's what President Clinton is doing, and I think he's quite right.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 155th news conference began at 11:08 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Pan Am 103 bombing suspects Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah; Betty Currie, the President's personal secretary; and U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright.

Statement on the United States-Mexico Binational Drug Strategy
February 6, 1998

I welcome the release today, with the Government of Mexico, of the U.S.-Mexico Binational Drug Strategy. This strategy lays out the concrete actions our two governments will take to fulfill the 16 goals set out in our Alliance Against

Drugs, including dismantling the criminal organizations that purvey these poisons, sustaining our success in reducing drug demand, and removing obstacles to even closer law enforcement cooperation with Mexico.

This strategy is guided by the principle that drug trafficking and drug abuse are shared international threats and that we can only defeat them by acting in common, with our other international partners. Our common efforts will uphold the sovereignty and rule of law which drug trafficking organizations seek to erode.

We are making great progress in the fight against drugs, but we cannot let up our efforts now. The fiscal year 1999 budget I proposed contains an increase of nearly \$500 million, to over \$5.8 billion for drug demand reduction, the largest total ever. I have also asked Congress to fund an additional 1,000 law enforcement officers for our borders, so we can slam the

door on drugs where they enter. Working with Mexico and our other partners in the hemisphere, we are developing new ways to strengthen multilateral efforts against drugs, to promote the synergies that can bolster our success.

The test of this strategy will be its results. I am pleased that the U.S.-Mexico High Level Contact Group Against Drugs, chaired on our side by General Barry McCaffrey, is proceeding immediately to develop agreed measures of performance that will tell us if and how well our strategy is succeeding, and how to continue strengthening our counternarcotics partnership with Mexico.

Statement on Signing Legislation Designating “Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport”

February 6, 1998

Today I have signed into law S. 1575, a bill passed to change the name of the Washington National Airport to the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. As the Nation celebrates President Reagan’s 87th birthday, we wish

him and his family well. He is in our thoughts and prayers.

NOTE: S. 1575, approved February 6, was assigned Public Law No. 105–154.

The President’s Radio Address

February 7, 1998

President Clinton. Good morning. Today I am pleased to be joined by an honored guest of our Nation, Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. We are speaking to you from the Map Room in the White House, where more than half a century ago President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill charted our path to victory in World War II.

As Eleanor Roosevelt said, that was no ordinary time. But neither is the new era we are entering. At home, we must prepare all our citizens to succeed in the information age. And abroad, we must not only take advantage of real new possibilities but combat a new nexus of threats, none more dangerous than chemical and biological weapons and the terrorists, criminals, and outlaw states that seek to acquire them.

As we face the challenges of the 21st century, the alliance between the United States and the United Kingdom remains unshakable. I’d like to ask Prime Minister Blair to say a word about what we have achieved together this week.

Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. Thank you. And thank you for asking me to share in your weekly address to the American people.

Britain and America have so much in common: language, values, belief in family and community, and a real sense of national pride. We share many problems, too, and it has been clear from our discussions that we are agreed, in general terms, about some of the solutions.

You took the tough decisions needed for long-term economic stability. We are doing so. You have focused on education, welfare reform, a